

CIA

As the Legislature considers sweeping Community Investment Act funds away from their intended purpose I write to request that such action be reconsidered. In its purest sense these funds are all about our community, have been strategically invested to aid historic preservation and the acts which have been accomplished are real and contribute to our lives and the well-being of our cities. During the years since it was created CIA monies have contributed to many projects which could not have been successful without critical funds to make them viable.

Hartford Preservation Alliance believes that its biggest client to be the City of Hartford with greater than 5,300 historic properties of record. In a review of the buildings, parks and other historic sites such as cemeteries CIA funds have contributed much to the fabric of the Capitol City. Numerous churches, public buildings, the Stowe Center, Mark Twain House have all received planning grants and/or renovation funding from CIA as has CT Main Street programs here. A survey grant helped to lay the groundwork for the State's gaining a National Park designation for Coltsville. Pre-development funding has been awarded to adaptive reuse projects to create affordable housing here. In a city where the poverty level hovers at about 39% of the population preservation of a high proportion of historic properties is citywide. We now are actively engaged in preservation as an engine driving community economic development. CIA funds have brought attention to several downtown buildings, long vacant and abandoned, which have now been reused to create 1,500 residential units here. Nearly half of these units are defined as affordable. Life and economic vitality has been ignited once again and this city is beginning to thrive. CIA funds were among the first monies into the deals which in turn leverages far greater financial resources such as the Capewell Lofts recently completed in a building which sat vacant for decades. On an important note, Hartford is soon to adopt a Blight Ordinance which should put teeth into the enforcement of owners to maintain properties in good repair. The City has identified buildings, one third of which are deemed to be historic, to be an initial focus. CIA funding is a critical component in the challenge to restore buildings and to build a tax base once again for Hartford.

Finally, historic preservation is not a money-making enterprise. As eager as Hartford Preservation Alliance is to be self-sustaining, we are exploring several methods to achieve this stability, we provide information, technical assistance and guidance without fees to owners without the ability to hire our consulting services. We view our work as a strategic partnership with the City of Hartford one which informs and guides our motto: "This Neighborhood Matters". CIA funds have helped to provide a financial lifeline for us to keep our doors open and by allowing us to maintain a place at the community development table. Our work is important as the City struggles financially. Your deliberation on future utilization of CIA funds has a direct effect on the how the City may use its historic fabric as a rebuilding block for financial equilibrium. We urge you to be judicious and you consider how important these dollars are in Hartford and throughout the state.. Thank you

Frank H. Hagaman
Executive Director

Hartford Preservation Alliance
www.hartfordpreservation.org
860-920-2410